SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

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WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The possibility of holding a world summit for social development is being further explored. As was explained in the last issue of this *Newsletter* (No. 28, 2/1991) the initiative had been taken by the Chairman of the Social Committee of the Economic and Social Council, the representative of Chile to the United Nations, Mr. Juan Somavia, at the first regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1991. By its decision 1991/230, the Council requested the Secretary-General to carry out consultations with all Member States on the possibility of convening a world summit for social development, and to submit a report on those consultations to the substantive session of the Council to be held in July 1992.

In July 1991, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, then Secretary-General, requested Mr. Juan Somavia to carry out these consultations as his Special Representative, and to report to him prior to the substantive session of the Council in 1992. The mandate of the Special Representative was confirmed by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali upon his taking office as Secretary-General.

On 30 September 1991, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 adopted a Declaration in which they reiterated the importance of social matters within the United Nations system, stressed the need for a concerted effort by developing countries to coordinate and harmonize their positions in this policy area and welcomed the possibility of convening a world summit for social development (A/46/520, annex, para. 42).

At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/139 of 17 December 1991, entitled "Social development". In this resolution, the Assembly invited the Special Representative to take due note in his report to the Secretary-General of the points of view expressed in the Assembly. It called upon Governments to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and his Special Representative by participating actively in the consultations requested by the Council. It also requested the concerned organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to assist the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in those consultations. Finally it called upon the Economic and Social Council, after considering the report of the Secretary-General requested by Council decision 1991/230, to make an appropriate recommendation to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

At the Summit Meeting of the Security Council held on 31 January 1992, a number of Governments also expressed their views on this matter. The Security Council stated that peace and prosperity were indivisible and that lasting peace and security required effective international cooperation for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of a better life for all in larger freedom. This pointed to the fact that there were sources of insecurity that the

competent socio-economic bodies of the United Nations system needed to address preventively so that they did not become traditional security problems. In May 1992, the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement also reached a decision that urged international support for the convening of a world summit for social development.

Early in 1992, the Secretary-General had sent a note to all Member States seeking the views of Governments in respect of Economic and Social Council decision 1991/230 on the possibility of convening a world summit for social development. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General took into consideration the views expressed by the Governments that responded when preparing his report, which in May 1992 he transmitted to the Secretary-General, who transmitted it in turn to the Council (E/1992/80, annex). The Secretary-General noted that a world summit for social development could provide leadership at the highest level for a shared worldwide commitment to put people at the centre of development and international cooperation. It could also enhance world peace and security by giving political impetus to satisfying social needs as an integral part of efforts for greater national and international stability. Moreover, such a summit could provide an important opportunity of developing a more comprehensive approach to United Nations actions in this sphere. In order to be successful, it would need to have an agenda of interest to all Member States, and an effective and well-managed preparatory process that would ensure a politically significant outcome, monitored by efficient follow-up procedures.

Here is a brief summary of the points made by the Special Representative in his report. In arguing for the holding of a world summit the Special Representative pointed out that, while recently there had been significant development in the political and security fields, including advances in human rights and democracy, the standard of living of the world's people had not significantly improved. Although very considerable efforts had been made at the national and international levels in the social field, and important successes had been registered in many countries, the fact was that globally there were more unemployed, more poor people and greater social insecurity than in the previous 10 years. That situation affected both developed and developing countries, although the impact was felt more acutely in the latter. Social development problems were truly global in scope, as was evidenced by the vast numbers of people suffering in too many places in the world. The greater sense of global political security was therefore to be contrasted in many instances with a sense of growing individual insecurity.

Security was interdependent: there would not be long-term security and stability in developed countries without security and stability in developing countries. This was considered equally valid in respect to the distance between affluent and poor sectors within a single country. Migration was the clearest manifestation of this: if people did not find security where they were born, they looked for it elsewhere and were prepared to move from rural to urban areas, from one country to another or from one continent to another. Still, migration had a positive aspect in that it continued to be an outlet for coping with individual insecurity. The build-up of tensions within countries, brought about by unbearable living conditions, had the potential to erupt in violence and to cause serious dislocations; this had already occurred in developing and developed countries alike. The unchecked growth of unemployment and poverty, with the resulting sense of marginalization and frustration, was a permanent source of political instability. These conditions were negatively affecting social cohesion, community integration and family structures, and having a serious impact on values and human relations. Existing institutions and policies were not coping adequately with contemporary social needs, leading to different forms of dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs. This sense of disenchantment expressed itself, in certain sectors, in social conduct ranging from ethnic and religious strife to drug consumption and a growing lack of interest in public affairs and traditional politics. There was also a growing preoccupation with open and latent forms of racism under the guise of migration policies in some societies.

In looking at what is commonly referred to as the "social cost" of structural adjustment

policies, it was appreciated that there were limits beyond which any immediate economic advantage gained might be off-set by the political instability generated and the danger it posed to social gains and new-found liberties: the way could be opened for a relapse into authoritarian rule. This reality had given further legitimacy to the idea of "adjustment with a human face", developed by the United Nations Children's Fund. It was important to identify the essential components of social efficiency in different economic and cultural settings by addressing in creative ways the interaction between the function of the State in providing a "social safety net", innovative market responses to social demands and the imperatives of sustainable development.

For these reasons the Special Representative noted that the process leading up to a world summit for social development, the political significance of the summit itself and the follow-up procedures to ensure the implementation of its decisions could be seen as major contributions to greater international stability. It was felt that the world was facing a unique opportunity of dealing with these problems with a renewed sense of urgency and an enlarged spirit of cooperation in addressing shared concerns. Consequently, a summit for social development could be a breakthrough on the road to a more humane world. The seriousness of the issues required that a summit should be convened at the level of Heads of State or Government. This was so because, within States, it was normally their responsibility to establish priorities between different social needs and to arbitrate between conflicting demands from ministries to meet social needs that in their total were usually greater than available resources. Heads of State or Government could upgrade the importance given to social development in the international agenda by making a strong political statement. They could act as catalysts for a global commitment to action to improve as a matter of priority the quality of life of people everywhere, thus helping to determine the shape of post-cold-war society.

The Special Representative suggested that the objectives of a summit might be:

(a) To further the obligations of the Charter of the United Nations by reaffirming, within clear political guidelines, the need for greater system-wide effectiveness "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom", and to "employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples";

(b) To give political leadership and express a shared worldwide commitment to put people at the centre of development and international cooperation;

(c) To enhance world peace and security through the achievement of greater social peace by giving political impetus to the satisfaction of social needs as an integral part of the efforts for greater national and international stability;

(d) To unleash the potential for public and private social development initiatives at the national level. Countries could be motivated to take the opportunity presented by the preparatory process leading to a world summit for national consensus-building in this crucial area and to deepen national commitment to the plight of the underprivileged. Emphasis could

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be given to identifying and promoting the many significant ways in which the private sector, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, churches and religious denominations, academic community and civil society in general might assist in advancing social development;

(e) To reach agreement on policies, goals and priority action that could be taken nationally and internationally to address major issues of shared global concern such as alleviation and reduction of poverty, enhancement of employment opportunities and promotion of greater social cohesion;

(f) To create international awareness of, and address the modalities of attaining, a necessary balance between economic efficiency and social efficiency in a growth-oriented and sustainable development environment of open economic systems;

(g) To consider ways in which the market could be used to address social needs, and to determine innovative and creative ways in which it may respond to social challenges;

(h) To conceptualize the political, social and economic dimensions of social development in a way that would reflect current realities, including the dramatic changes taking place in the world. The summit would provide an opportunity to assemble the best minds and sources of policy analysis with a view to determining the relevance of current development thinking and practice to contemporary social needs; reinforcing those concepts that remain cogent; refocusing those that had been ineffective under current circumstances; and promoting new solutions to long-standing problems.

Given that social development was so broad a concept, the Special Representative considered that it was not conceivable that all of its dimensions could be addressed by a world summit. It was essential, therefore, to focus on a limited number of concisely formulated core issues, priority areas in which positive action would improve the actual conditions of life for the more disadvantaged sectors of society. Among the principal issues identified in the consultations held by the Special Representative were gender discrimination and other issues related to equality and the participation of women; adequate availability of food and housing; qualitative and quantitative improvement in health care and educational opportunities; situation of children and the elderly; crime prevention and criminal justice; appropriate policies and consumption patterns to alleviate pressures on scarce resources; the situation of handicapped people; production, consumption and traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; spread of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS); and implications of migration.

The notion of good governance had been raised also. The concept included recognition of the limits of government action; sound economic management (including appropriate levels of military spending, and responsible fiscal and monetary policies); and positive social policies. The need to address social issues in the context of the overall development process, and the importance of recognizing the different linkages to economic policies, had also been highlighted.

On all these issues, the United Nations was already well advanced in work towards the achievement of targets, goals and objectives approved by the international community. Three major problem areas had been repeatedly mentioned as synthesizing the main issues involved, requiring urgent action and being relevant to developing and developed countries alike. These were the alleviation and reduction of poverty with particular emphasis on the problem of the feminization of poverty, and the situation of children and elderly; the need for generating productive employment, including investment in human resources; and the strengthening of social cohesion.

The Special Representative considered that the summit should not be seen only as an event but also as a process. The decision to convene it would open the way for greater weight to be given to social issues in national and international decision-making. Also, it would stimulate the United Nations system as a whole to strengthen cooperation on this issue; non-governmental organizations would be activated; multilateral lending institutions would seek ways of cooperating with the United Nations and a score of actions would take place in and out of the public sector. Not least among them would be an increase in global consciousness of the significance of the issues addressed by the summit.

Although it was not yet possible to identify precisely the exact form in which the summit should express its conclusions, consultations had helped to identify some possible outcomes: those included a political statement, and a plan of action possibly geared towards the development of a United Nations integrated programme for social development which, while respecting the decision-making autonomy of each organ, agency and programme, could give common guidelines that would promote greater integration of projects and programmes at the operational level. The plan would reinforce the United Nations system and not create new institutions.

A programme of action could also be based on a comparative analysis of social welfare policy models in different developmental, cultural and political contexts, and on the identification of successful initiatives that might be adapted for use in other countries. That could lead to a major international effort to promote technical cooperation in the formulation of national policies for social development with particular emphasis on the exchange of experiences between developing countries, making the summit a "Global marketplace for social initiatives".

The summit, with its objective of highlighting the political importance of social development, would act as a major boost to ministries in charge of social issues in their efforts to increase the size of their participation in the national budget. Utilizing the summit as a basis for consensus-building, a national commitment for social development could generate new internal resources, including private voluntary contributions, as well as agreements on measures to stimulate better income distribution, without affecting the capacity for sustainable growth in each national economy.

At the bilateral level, both donor and recipient countries could decide in their own bilateral dealings to increase the relative importance of the social sector or to augment the overall cooperation flows earmarked for those activities as a result of the political importance given to that sector by the summit.

The decision to convene a summit and initiate the preparatory process could have an indirect effect on the lending policies of multilateral financial institutions. The existing trend towards more awareness of the human implications of structural adjustment measures could be reinforced by a summit, particularly in relation to the situation of the least developed countries.

Reinforcing United Nations institutions in the social field by means of innovative approaches could be stimulated: for example, the possibility of increasing private contributions for United Nations initiatives, the promotion of social development campaigns within developed countries for the purposes of poverty alleviation in developing countries, the identification of social projects as part of the already existing system of "sister cities", cooperation between developed and developing countries to be implemented through United Nations mechanisms and the incorporation of social objectives in investment projects.

Finally, the deepening understanding of the peace and security implications of social development resulting from the preparatory process of a summit could lead many developed countries to conclude that to invest in the security of the developing countries, through assistance for effective social development programmes, could be highly productive in respect to their own long-term security.

Action taken by the Economic and Social Council

At its substantive session of 1992, which was held from 29 June to 31 July at New York, the Social Committee of the Council recommended to the Council the adoption of a resolution on social development. The draft resolution was sponsored by 116 Member States. In this draft resolution the Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General (E/1992/80) and of the positive outcome of the consultations on the possibility of convening a world summit for social development. It expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General and the Special Representative for their efforts in carrying out a comprehensive process of consultation on the matter, and it recommended that the General Assembly should convene a world summit for social development, at the level of Head of State or Government, to be

held in early 1995. The Council further recommended that the Assembly at its forty-seventh session should take action on the proposed summit, including appropriate decisions on its agenda, means of preparation and other relevant modalities. Finally, the Council requested the Secretary-General to carry out consultations on the draft resolution and to present an oral report to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

SOCIAL POLICIES IN THE TRANSITION TO A MARKET ECONOMY

Report of a mission to the Russian Federation organized by the United Nations, Moscow, 19-24 January 1992

In 1990 the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna held discussions with senior members of the Government of the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on a variety of social concerns, initially on reforms of the criminal justice system and drug-abuse control. Those subsequently broadened to include the social implications of contemplated economic reforms. Already at an early stage of the planning of reforms it was widely appreciated in official circles that radical economic change implied no less radical social change, with new responsibilities having to be assumed by the Government, the social partners and the individual. It was apparent that the process of transition to a market economy would be painful for many people and presented clear dangers of social chaos. There was an urgent need to introduce measures to protect the vulnerable and to mitigate the most severe social costs; outside advice on how this might best be accomplished was sought.

Consequently, a distinguished international group chaired by Sir Alan Peacock, Research Professor in Public Finance at Heriot-Walt University, Edinburgh, Scotland, was brought together by the United Nations at the request of the Soviet (later Russian) authorities. The group visited Moscow in January 1992, at the invitation of the Government of the Russian Federation. Its preliminary report was completed for submission to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the Russian authorities immediately following the visit to Moscow. It identified priority areas for specific action and possibilities for future cooperation with institutions in other countries.

The mission later submitted a final report to the Russian authorities. This report amplifies their findings and takes account of further reflections by individual members. It was agreed that it should be made widely available in order to welcome wide discussion of what must be controversial, though carefully considered, proposals. The drafting of this report was done by the rapporteur Dr. Michael Hay, of the London Business School, supported by the Mission's chairperson. The David Hume Institute, a registered charity located in Edinburgh, whose objects are to promote discourse and research, primarily on economic and legal aspects of public policy, welcomed the opportunity of publishing the report.

Purpose of the mission

The task of the mission was to consider the social implications of the transition to a market economy and to recommend how a social policy should be devised that would complement this major change in economic organization. It would then be left to the United Nations Office at Vienna, in collaboration with the Russian and possibly other Governments of the Commonwealth of Independent States, to identify the individuals and institutions who could assist the relevant public and private organizations to develop appropriate strategies. Russian expertise and knowledge of the environment in which social reforms would have to take place could then be reinforced by exposure to Western expertise and Western critical appraisal of its own experience.

The mission decided to restrict itself to defining basic principles that should govern social-protection measures, identifying key priorities and trying to create the foundations on which a framework of cooperation and further action could be developed. The report outlines a broad social-policy framework and indicates the directions in which social-protection measures might be developed. The adumbration of detailed measures was considered a task properly left to officials, working with professionals having real expertise

in specific areas: pensions, health care and so forth.

Assumptions concerning the implications for social policy of economic policy changes

The mission attempted to spell out the logic of a social policy that would be complementary to the radical changes wrought by a determined attempt to create a market economy. The logic pointed towards far-reaching and therefore controversial changes in the thrust of social policy.

The mission accepted that, in practice at least, a pure market economy could not by itself guarantee that poverty - the main concern of social protection - would be eliminated. Rapid transition to a market economy of the kind envisaged for Russia would produce radical changes in individual circumstances which, hopefully temporarily, would reveal a high incidence of economic hardship which it was in the interests of all to ameliorate. However, measures to promote social protection must and could be devised which would be compatible with a growing reliance on market forces as the prime method for allocating resources. Support for the less fortunate must be designed to improve understanding and appreciation of the virtues of a freely working price system. It was necessary therefore to create the conditions which would enable individuals to help themselves.

Prevention by means of macro-economic measures would be of basic importance. An attempt to eliminate economic hardship could reasonably begin by considering those measures which might prevent it existing in the first place. This is why considerable attention must be paid to positive measures, notably those which, ideally, should be in place to deal with the transfer of labour from public to private enterprise.

Social protection should be framed within tight budgetary constraints. The Government's emphasis on seeking to finance social expenditure by reallocation of expenditure rather than by increasing the size of the budget relative to the rest of the economy was felt to be correct, though it seemed likely that the process of reallocation would be slow and painful. There would be a temptation, therefore, in the short term, to "solve" the social-protection problem by generous increases in money benefits. Such an approach would be self-defeating for it would simply add to existing inflationary pressures. However, to finance social protection measures within tight budgetary constraints, which the mission strongly endorsed, was not to say that there were not particular groups whose circumstances would demand significant increases in government support.

Particular attention was paid to the question of how best to help those who could not under any circumstances help themselves, such as the very old and the mentally handicapped. The mission emphasized that no social programme could be developed without reference to the political and economic environment in which it had to operate. This was a particularly important consideration when a country had decided to change its whole economic system. Fundamental to the successful transition to a social market economy would be the introduction of social-protection measures that would reinforce rather than compromise reform.

A central objective of social protection must be to create conditions in which individuals and families could help themselves. During the reform process certain groups would be more exposed and vulnerable than others. After transition there would remain groups who would be, by virtue of age, disability or lack of skills, ill-equipped or unable to help themselves. It would be necessary to guarantee minimum standards of social protection for those groups most at risk.

In the transition to a market economy the principle of self-help could not be universally applied. For many groups in society self-help would not be an option, for example for the sick, the elderly (particularly single pensioners), young children, families with a large number of dependents and the unemployed with little prospect of re-employment, at least in the shorter term. Similarly, those on fixed incomes would be particularly hard hit by price liberalization, as would individuals whose assets consist principally of cash savings.

Inevitably, the transition process would tend to widen income differentials since many members of the population would be in no position to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by market liberalization. Indeed, even after the establishment of a fully functioning market economy, which should bring with it increased equality of opportunity, there would remain groups of the population for whom specific protective measures were required. While their requirements would be greatest during the difficult transition stage, they would not disappear subsequently. Various forms of carefully targeted provision would be called for through a structure of benefits for which there were well-defined groups of recipients.

Defining target groups

A compelling case for targeting provision could be made on the basis of a combination of practical rather than philosophical considerations: limited financial and commodity resources; budget constraints; and feasibility. Political effects were considered significant: social-protection measures had a major role to play in engendering popular political support for reform. Alleviating the difficulties of those groups most at risk and vulnerable to the short-term consequences of reform would be one way of maximizing the political gains that could be had. The impact of price liberalization would be severe for those groups on fixed incomes, those whose assets principally comprise of cash savings and those receiving subsistence income support (for example students). Inflation would hit such groups hardest. Protection geared specifically to the needs of those most vulnerable to inflation was therefore imperative.

Only by targeting benefits would the limited resources available be utilized in a cost-effective manner. Moreover, targeting fitted well-established practice, although this was not to endorse some of the forms of benefit provided.

The definition of target groups should be undertaken on the basis of existing categories, rather than of creating wholly new categories for which there is neither the time to undertake the necessary processing, nor the resources available to provide additional support. A targeting framework existed and should be used. Groups currently targeted would correlate sufficiently well with the very poor and those groups most at risk: the elderly (particularly single pensioners), families with a large number of dependents, the handicapped, the unemployable and the sick.

The effective delivery of targeted protection required that members of those groups most at risk be identified correctly. The mission was strongly of the view that that could not be determined centrally. Delineating categories of protection was a task that resided legitimately at the centre, but it would be unrealistic to expect the central authorities to be able to identify accurately who belonged to which category. Achieving this required detailed local knowledge. Responsibility for determining precisely who should receive what form of available protection should be devolved to the local level.

The mission therefore favoured provision by external donors of food for sale through normal market channels, and the utilization of the proceeds to fund cash transfers. This mechanism, more than the other alternatives available, would serve to reinforce rather than hinder the development of market mechanisms.

The protection of those not in work represented a major challenge. The need to address this was made all the more urgent by the very real possibility that large-scale unemployment could become a major source of social unrest and political tension. The transition to a market economy would inevitably cause major dislocation of economic activity which would give rise to long-term structural unemployment. That is, unemployment would not be a short-term shift, but rather a deep-seated, structural change - the consequences of which would take many years to resolve. The problem was not simply one of frictional unemployment. Proposals would have to be geared therefore to meeting the needs of, and providing protection for, the long-term unemployed. The rate at which newly privatized or established businesses created employment would fall significantly below the rate of increase in unemployment.

The problem to be tackled therefore was one of long-term unemployment. The issues to be

addressed would include: the provision and creation of employment opportunities for the unemployed; social protection for people who may not return to work; and the provision of training and counselling services on a major scale. The mission proposed a strategy of linking benefit to activity. Some form of linkage should be established between the receipt of unemployment benefit, particularly on a long-term basis (i.e. more than one year), and engagement in non-professional and social community services. It was not the mission's view that discharging a social obligation, for example by participating in voluntary social service activity, should be a prerequisite to receiving benefit. Even if the mission were to subscribe to such a view, the conditions in which it could be fairly applied did not exist in the Russian Federation. Such a system could only be implemented fairly if (a) the social obligations were there to be discharged by unemployed individuals, and (b) the administrative arrangements were in place to operate what was, in effect, a form of assistance sometimes referred to as "workfare". In the current context neither of those conditions could be met.

The mission's broad proposal did not therefore spring from a desire to see a system of workfare in operation. Rather, it reflected a belief that the voluntary sector would have an increasingly important role to play in easing the transition to a market economy and that every support should be given to voluntary initiatives. Critical to the success of many such initiatives would be the availability of individuals willing and able to participate. Given the likelihood of persistent, long-term unemployment, the mission believed that encouraging the unemployed to engage in such activities should be accorded priority.

Delivery of social-protection measures

The mission considered that the success of social-protection measures would be determined, in large part, by the means selected to deliver protection to clearly defined groups and individuals: that is the full range of administrative procedures by which welfare policy would be translated into action. In choosing specific measures just as much attention should be given to the question of delivery as to the substantive content of the policy measures themselves. The mission felt that its proposals represented a radical departure from current practice and policy. The current system was judged to be ill-suited to contemporary needs, indeed, antithetical to what was required.

The principles on which welfare in the former Soviet Union had been administered were characterized by a strong, explicit bias in favour of a centralized, command approach, particularly in terms both of the formulation of the rules governing social protection and the definition of the categories of entitlement. Any scope for discretion on the part of local officials had been virtually eliminated. There was neither the latitude nor the incentive for local officials to exercise discretion over the way in which policies were implemented. Rules were explicit and the categories clear, thus leaving local officials with simply the task of putting them into effect. The central authorities felt that local officials would have been too willing to provide assistance and thus undermine the incentive to participate in the labour force. Trade unions had played the pivotal role in administering social security programmes. Where necessary that function had been supplemented by the wages and salaries departments of State enterprises. Consequently, the administrative structure did not maintain a large body of officials capable of exercising discretion. There was a general recognition of that within government circles, combined with a strong and frequently expressed determination to find new solutions to current problems and not repeat what were already regarded as "the mistakes of the past".

In those circumstances the task of introducing an entirely different approach to social protection would be a difficult one. The mission advanced two core propositions in respect of the delivery of social protection: devolution of responsibility for social protection and development of non-governmental organizations. Recognizing that centralized structures and procedures for the delivery of social protection were not well adapted to current needs, the Government of the Russian Federation was redirecting financial resources from central to local budgets for the purpose of funding locally administered social-protection

measures. The intention was that one third of the revenue raised from privatization should be transferred from central to local authorities, along with a significant proportion of income tax revenue. Underpinning that was an assumption that, henceforth, local authorities using local budgets would play a leading role in the delivery of social-protection measures, primarily at the expense of the trade unions which would have a significantly smaller part to play.

The mission pointed out, however, that the diversion of central budget funds to local budgets must be accompanied by the genuine devolution of responsibility for social security at the local level. However, the development of social welfare had not been accompanied by the creation of a cadre of officials at the local level, with either the experience or the expertise of operating effectively. Nothing had prepared those operating at the local level to take on the responsibilities now required of them. The gap between the federal structures and the local level was very wide. The Government could issue any number of decrees, but it was very difficult to implement them at the local level. Consequently, the mission felt that to expect local authorities to be able to take on responsibility for the judicious and effective administration of social protection would be foolhardy. However, that did not detract from the urgent need to embark on the creation of appropriate structures and the training, on a major scale, of local officials. Difficult though the situation was, the devolution of responsibility from central to local authorities must continue. While policy design and the monitoring of policy implementation would remain the legitimate preserve of the Centre, discretion over exactly how the policies were implemented must reside locally. Clearly that required a redefinition of central/local relations, combined with the sustained development of effective local administration. Developing such responsibility was, the mission believed, a necessary adjunct of the move to a social market economy.

In respect to the development of non-governmental organizations, the mission felt that it would be unreasonable and unrealistic to expect government authorities, at both central and local levels, to discharge the full range of social protection responsibilities. Non-governmental, voluntary and charitable organizations or associations had a crucial role to play, working in conjunction with official channels. However, neither current social conditions nor the historical development of voluntary activities in the former Soviet Union favoured the emergence or growth of non-governmental organizations. Indeed, the public perception of the extent to which such organizations could provide genuine help was best described as sceptical. Voluntary or charitable work had a somewhat tarnished image by virtue of its long association with the Communist Party. There was no real tradition of genuinely charitable work in an organizational sense: the social conditions necessary for charitable purposes were absent and it was unlikely that new entrepreneurs would take that on.

However, the mission felt that there existed ample evidence of the revitalization of the voluntary sector and a growing recognition of the part that it had to play in the reform process. Encouraging and promoting that development should be a fundamental government priority. Achieving that would entail providing tax incentives for genuinely not-for-profit organizations, providing a stable legal framework in which they could develop and create the conditions in which public confidence in that form of social protection could be restored. The mission believed that churches could have an important role to play: but that issue clearly required much fuller exploration.

A framework for future cooperation

The mission considered that detailed follow-up work would be essential. Such work should be guided by a commitment to self-determination; local adaptation; technical support; and self-sufficiency. The Government and administration of each of the former republics must select for itself the methods best suited to resolving the difficulties it faced. Local adaptation would be essential. Western models of social protection in areas such as pensions, health care and employment retraining had been shaped by the context in which they had developed. There was no single model or combination of methods that could be deemed

right. What worked in one social context might be wholly inappropriate in another. The mission concluded that it would be foolish to set out a blueprint for social reform. It would be inappropriate to claim that, even after careful study, there could be only one plan that would work. The Russian authorities averred that they had the intellectual resources and expertise to carry out reforms for themselves and that what was required was an adjustment in their own thinking in the light of the mission's proposals. Transition to a social market economy did not eliminate fundamental social and cultural differences. Social protection policies, and methods and forms of delivery developed in the West must therefore be adapted and changed to meet local requirements. Their straightforward transfer or transposition was neither feasible nor desirable.

Translating Western methods into terms appropriate for the Russian context would require technical support on a continuous regular basis and at an adequate level of detail. It would also require genuine receptivity on the part of those individuals and institutions providing such support to adapting and where necessary fundamentally changing their methods to meet local needs. Self-sufficiency would be essential. The sharing of technical expertise and know-how should have a single long-term objective: to create systems that could be effectively administered by local people without recourse to outside advice.

The model of cooperation envisaged by the mission comprised three stages. First, maximizing direct exposure for administrators, at every level, to Western methods and forms of social protection. Secondly, a process of narrowing the range of options, and the choice by local authorities between alternative methods. Thirdly, a longer term process of dispersal of adopted methods supported by detailed technical assistance.

Exposure to Western methods was necessary: there should be a direction of aid towards facilitating the massive exposure of officials, at all levels, to Western methods. Such exposure must be direct, not second-hand. Opportunities must be created for individuals to see at first-hand social-security systems in operation. Capturing the reality of Western models, grasping their limitations and understanding the institutional requirements associated with different methods of social protection were critical. Direct exposure to Western methods and forms of social protection would be much more effective than tying aid to the acceptance of specific institutional changes which could be both inappropriate and unacceptable.

The United Nations had the role of devising programmes, identifying suitable host organizations, coordinating activities and promoting long-term technical support. The United Nations should play a decisive coordinating role as the mission believed there to be a real danger of authorities, in Russia and elsewhere, being saturated by advisers working on an ad hoc basis. That had numerous drawbacks: inefficient use of time by hard-pressed officials; continuous reinvention of the wheel by different outside advisers; lack of sustained follow-up.

The first step would be for the United Nations, perhaps in association with other international bodies, to canvass suggestions on Western models of delivery of social protection which might serve as general models. Such models might require extensive adaptation in order to fit with Russian conditions. That would be followed immediately by enlistment of the cooperation of those organizations and individuals whose experience and expertise seemed of most relevance. Simultaneously should come the selection; on the Russian side, of the best people to fulfil the task of study, interpretation and, later, where appropriate, to copy those models considered worth adopting in some form or other. The process would have to overcome language barriers, and differences in outlook and commitment. In order to ensure effective local delivery of social protection such linkages as "Town twinning" might be forged. Where such links were strong, rapid transfers of ideas could be achieved. It would be comparatively easy also to strengthen existing contacts by facilitating the acquaintance of Russian administrators of social policies with Finnish institutions. The experience of Finnish non-profitmaking organizations in the delivery of social services would be a good starting point for Russo-Finnish cooperation. At every stage of the process, the public must be kept informed of the reasons for public action and

must know where to seek advice on how they would be affected by it. Failure to prepare the public for social policy changes by explaining their purpose could threaten the very foundations of reform.

For copies of the report apply to the Editor of this *Newsletter*, or to Hector MacQueen, Director, the David Hume Institute, 21 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD, Scotland.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Decisions of the General Assembly

At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/128 of 17 December 1991 on the International Year for the World's Indigenous People (1993). In doing so, the Assembly bore in mind that one of the purposes of the United Nations set forth in its Charter is the achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

In its latest resolution, the Assembly reaffirmed its resolution 45/164 of 18 December 1990, proclaiming 1993 as the International Year for the World's Indigenous People. This had been adopted with a view to strengthening international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous communities in areas such as human rights, the environment, development, education and health. Recognizing the value and the diversity of the cultures and forms of social organization of the world's indigenous people, the Assembly, in resolution 46/128, requested the Secretary-General to proclaim, during its forty-sixth session, the theme "Indigenous People - a new partnership" for the International Year. It recommended that the specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system, in their consideration of the contributions that they could make to the success of the Year, be guided by the ways in which their operational activities could most effectively contribute to the solution of problems faced by indigenous people, and by the ways in which indigenous people could play an important role in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects which might affect them.

Also in its resolution 46/128, the General Assembly encouraged States to consult with indigenous people, and non-governmental organizations working them, regarding activities for the Year, and it invited States to inform the Secretary-General of their initiatives. The Assembly also invited those States that were in a position to do so to consider means by which they could provide resources to assist the United Nations work on the Year, for example, by the secondment of suitable staff.

The Assembly decided that the Coordinator of the Year, a function which the Assembly recommended to be undertaken by the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, should convene early in 1992 a technical meeting of agencies, regional commissions and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system with representatives of States, organizations of indigenous peoples and other non-governmental organizations having a special interest in indigenous matters. The meeting would, among other things, identify programme areas or capabilities that are of particular relevance and priority to indigenous people; agree on specific objectives for special projects to be implemented in 1993 as part of the Year and ensure their consonance with the theme and objectives of the Year; consider existing project guidelines and recommend effective means for including indigenous people in the initiation, design and implementation of these special projects; and suggest appropriate procedures and criteria for the evaluation of projects involving indigenous people, in 1993 and thereafter.

Programme of activities for the International Year for the World's Indigenous People

A programme of activities for the Year was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/128, annex. In addition to comprehensive promotional and public information activities to be undertaken at the international level, and directed at both

indigenous and non-indigenous populations, the programme includes a number of operational activities to be undertaken by the United Nations system. These included increasing the coordination, cooperation and technical assistance activities undertaken by United Nations agencies and bodies for the purpose of promoting and aiding the solution of problems faced by indigenous communities in areas such as human rights, the environment, development, education and health; funding projects for indigenous communities that reflected the wishes of indigenous people, and that could have a direct benefit to their communities; establishing networks of indigenous organizations and communities for the sharing of information and experience in particular fields, such as health care, bilingual education, resource and environmental management; and contracting and seconding indigenous organizations and indigenous persons with relevant expertise in carrying out projects for the benefit of indigenous communities throughout the world.

Other operational activities were directed at increasing the awareness of the existence of relevant international legal instruments related to the objectives of the Year, and at promoting their widespread ratification and implementation; and at providing technical assistance to Governments wishing to make provisions in their legislation for the protection and promotion of the human rights of indigenous people, in particular on questions of land, environmental protection and strengthening of cultural identity, as well as technical and financial assistance for the implementation of such legislation.

At the national level, Governments of Member States were invited to undertake comprehensive promotional and informational activities in partnership with indigenous people. Indigenous organizations and communities could be encouraged to prepare their own programmes of activities and to take a number of measures, including planning demonstration projects in development, the environment, health, education and other areas.

Activities of the United Nations Development Programme

At its thirty-ninth session held from 4 to 29 May 1992, at Geneva, Switzerland, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) considered a report (DP/1992/61) of its Administrator on the International Year for the World's Indigenous People. The Administrator noted that there were clear indications of the growing commitment on the part of the international community to address the problems faced by indigenous communities. Actions were being encouraged which protected and promoted the rights of indigenous people; recognized and made use of their skills and knowledge in critically important areas; and enabled them to participate in all areas of development. In association with developing country Governments and the specialized agencies of the United Nations, UNDP had long been concerned with the situation of indigenous people, and had funded in recent years a number of workshops, seminars and rural development projects in Latin America, the Central African Republic and Laos. Technical assistance had been provided to the Government of Bolivia, acting on behalf of other Governments in the region, for the establishment of a fund for the development of indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean. The UNDP contribution to the preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) had consisted of the organization, in March 1991, of an international consultation with non-governmental organizations on poverty, the environment and development, with participation from indigenous organizations, and with support to Brazilian indigenous organizations for activities related to UNCED.

In respect to future activities, the Administrator pointed out that indigenous communities around the world varied greatly from demographic, economic, cultural and other points of view. However, they shared several common characteristics which, taken together, defined indigenous people as vulnerable groups often living in extreme poverty. These characteristics were a subordinate position within national societies; marginal and inhospitable territories; subsistence economies; languages which were, for the most part,

unwritten; cultural marginalization; maladjustments due to migration from rural to urban areas; and threatened ancestral habitats, particularly rain forests. UNDP had identified human development as the framework for all its activities. Two areas of activity most relevant to the needs of indigenous people were poverty eradication, and grass-roots participation in development and environmental problems and in natural-resource management. Following a process of consultation which had taken place since 1991 with indigenous people's organizations and experts, the Administrator suggested that UNDP could support the following types of activities:

(a) *Improvement of living standards*, through (i) nutrition, including in particular the recovery of indigenous knowledge of nutrition and related changes in dietary habits; (ii) health, in particular health education for healers, midwives and other indigenous health specialists, and projects combining small-scale modern technology and traditional experience; and (iii) social security, including the introduction of community-based health-care systems articulated with services available from the State, local governments and the private sector;

(b) *Economic and technological development* through (i) removal of obstacles to creativity, promotion of entrepreneurial capacity and articulation of indigenous people's economic processes with existing structures and markets; (ii) greater participation in decision-making on, and management of, territories and resources; (iii) articulation of traditional and modern know-how in order to raise incomes through small capital investments and better use of labour and natural resources; and (iv) dissemination and replication of successful approaches and projects and exchanges of skills and experience;

(c) *Preservation of natural resources and environmental development* through (i) recovery, consolidation and dissemination of traditional knowledge and skills in the use and maintenance of natural habitats and resources; (ii) participation of indigenous communities in resource management and conservation strategies and practices; and (iii) preservation of indigenous peoples' territories from environmentally unsound or socially and culturally inappropriate activities;

(d) *Cultural revitalization* through (i) recovery, strengthening and dissemination of indigenous traditions and languages; (ii) acquisition of skills in handling official languages; and (iii) networking and replication of successful approaches and projects.

Like other activities undertaken by UNDP to promote human development, those people concerned with improving the condition of indigenous people were to participate in their design, implementation and evaluation. They would also be based on the concept of reciprocity, which would make it possible to utilize the knowledge and skills of indigenous communities, in particular in natural resources management, and environmental conservation and health (e.g. medicinal plants), on a broader societal base. Where appropriate, collaboration with non-governmental organizations working with indigenous people would be encouraged.

Activities of the United Nations Children's Fund

In decision 1991/7 (E/ICEF/1991/15), the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) called upon the UNICEF secretariat to formulate concrete plans for the contribution of UNICEF to the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, in collaboration with organizations of indigenous people, and to report on progress to the Executive Board at its 1992 session. The Board also requested the UNICEF secretariat to give particular attention, in formulating plans for the International Year, to measures for strengthening the quality and accessibility of UNICEF projects in areas inhabited by indigenous people, taking into account the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/25, annex of 20 November 1989.

Particularly relevant are articles 29 and 30 of the Convention. Article 29 (d) states that States parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin. Article 30

states that in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

NGO Committee on the International Year for the World's Indigenous People

In November 1991, the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council recognized the NGO Committee on the International Year for the World's Indigenous People. The Committee seeks to strengthen the developing relationship between the United Nations system and indigenous peoples. Currently the Committee is chaired by the representative of the Anglican Consultative Council.

In March 1992, the Committee sponsored a day-long seminar that was attended by over 70 delegates representing many thousands of indigenous people from all over the world. That meeting produced a strong statement of the expectations of indigenous peoples, which was then submitted to the technical meeting called for in General Assembly resolution 46/128, which was held under the auspices of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights at Geneva, from 9 to 12 March 1992. Further information on the work of the Committee may be obtained from the Under-Secretary-General, Centre for Human Rights, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; telephone: (41)(22) 734-60-11; telefax: 733-98-79.

Activities of the Social Development Division

Just as UNDP intended to support the recovery and strengthening of indigenous knowledge and practices, as well as the better articulation of traditional and modern know-how, in respect to nutrition, health, economic processes, and the use and maintenance of natural habitats and resources, so the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs is concerned first to identify indigenous capabilities to prevent, whenever possible, individual dysfunction, or to care for and rehabilitate dysfunctional or disadvantaged individuals; to articulate these capabilities with society-wide measures; and wherever appropriate to transfer knowledge existing on indigenous cultures for application elsewhere in national society.

During the first half of 1992, information and comments continued to be received from institutions and specialists throughout the world in response to requests made the previous year. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/90, a working paper will be prepared as a basis for the design of a comprehensive programme of policy-oriented research and development during the International Year for the World's Indigenous People (see the *Social Development Newsletter*, No. 28, 2/1991). The results of the analysis will be used also as an input to the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Guiding Principles (see page 4 above) and to the Seminar held in September 1992 (see page 24 below). A summary of the principal findings will be included in the next issue of the *Newsletter* (No. 30, 2/1992) to appear in December 1992.

SUPPORT FOR COOPERATIVES

Work to promote and support cooperatives continued during the first part of 1992 (for a summary of the functions of the Social Development Division in respect to cooperatives, see the *Social Development Newsletter*, No. 28 (2/1991, pp. 6-7).

In April the draft was completed of the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on the status and role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends (A/47/216 - E/1992/43). It was examined by the Economic and Social Council in July, and will be examined by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Prepared pursuant to a request by the General Assembly set out in its resolution 44/58, the report was prepared on the basis of 50 replies from governmental agencies responsible for national policy in

respect to cooperatives or national representative organizations of cooperatives, in 40 countries, to a questionnaire sent out by the Secretary-General in July/1991. Respondents were from the following countries: Bahrain, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia (5), Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador (2), Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Malaysia, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway (2), New Zealand, Pakistan (2), Panama (2), Philippines (2), Peru, Poland (2), Russian Federation, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Preparation benefited very considerably from close collaboration between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the six other members of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC): International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAAW), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). A wide-ranging discussion had taken place at this Committee's 45th meeting in February 1991, and at its 46th meeting in September 1991, on the nature of relevant trends and their impact upon the cooperative sector, and of the means whereby cooperatives might best contribute to economic and social progress. Also considered had been the means whereby Governments and the intergovernmental community might best help to create a favourable environment for the further development of cooperatives.

A first draft of the report was reviewed comprehensively by COPAC at its 47th meeting, held in March 1992. Information and views were also provided by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNDP, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the ILO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, FAO, World Health Organization, World Bank/IFC, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and International Fund for Agricultural Development, as well as by the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Entente Council.

A number of conclusions of major significance for social policy are reached in the report based on a review of the achievements of the cooperative sector, its response to recent societal processes and its potential for contributing further to economic and social progress, as well as its review of the promotional and supportive activities of Governments and intergovernmental organizations, which were designed to establish a positive environment within which cooperatives might achieve their own goals as well as contribute to economic and social progress. On the basis of these conclusions, the Secretary-General made a number of recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

In the report it is stated that cooperatives are of considerable economic importance in many Member States, regional and interregional trade between them is growing significantly, they contribute to successful achievement of the objectives of structural adjustment while ameliorating the severity of the impact of such changes, and they are able to play a significant role in the achievement of an ecologically rational and sustainable form of development. Consequently, close attention to the potential contribution of cooperatives to national economic and social progress appears to be a promising option for Governments to examine, especially where confronted by very severe problems of structural transformation. They might consider especially noteworthy the fact that the economies of all of the advanced market-oriented economies, which are fully acknowledged to be mixed in the sense of there existing a substantial partnership between public and private sectors, are mixed also in that cooperatives constitute a significant and successful element of the private sector, and hence of national economies. Cooperative business enterprises play a key role in the private sector, especially in agriculture, where they are often dominant. For example, more

than half of European agricultural produce is harvested, processed or sold through cooperative marketing systems. Cooperatives are responsible for nearly 12 per cent of all American exports. Moreover, in spite of some failures, whose incidence might in fact not be greater than that in other parts of the private sector, cooperatives in these economies, including those with the most competitive business environments, have been able to respond to new and tough economic conditions. The willingness of private enterprises, including major international corporations, to enter into partnerships with them, is clear evidence of the entrepreneurial capacity and managerial efficiency of which cooperatives are capable.

These facts argue forcibly for giving greater prominence to cooperatives as a means of contributing to economic restructuring and social progress in the countries of central and eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In the former group of countries, liberalization and privatization policies designed to achieve full transformation to a market-determined economic system were initially hostile to all forms of cooperative endeavour, identified very closely by the public and Governments alike with previous regimes. For these reasons, cooperatives have faced complex problems. However, recently a climate far more favourable for the development of true cooperatives has been established in some countries. This progress has reflected realization by Governments that economic transformation is by no means easy. They are better aware of the numerous problems involved in such unprecedented change, and that its negative effects upon living standards require urgent attention. The public has realized that the expected fruits of privatization will not be quick to appear, and that cooperatives are able to play an important role in absorbing unemployment and providing goods and services. Entrepreneurs are realizing that the cooperative mode is by no means antagonistic to success. They and officials are now more familiar with the real role of cooperatives in existing market-determined societies. Socio-psychological benefits are accruing to an increasing number of citizens unused to an active role in any association but gaining experience through their membership in true cooperatives.

Cooperatives in Africa, Asia and Latin America have similarly helped persons to avoid the negative impact of structural adjustment. In Colombia, for example, persons made redundant from State enterprises have established labour-contracting cooperatives, and have then provided technical services to the enterprises which formerly employed them. Labour-contracting cooperatives maintain most of the national road system, formerly a public sector responsibility, in successful partnership with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. The International Fund for Agricultural Development has arrived at very specific conclusions in this regard: genuine, cost-effective and well-performing cooperative societies offer ideal and sustainable institutional structures to improve the delivery of project-provided goods and services to target groups in poverty-alleviation projects, but only if project design and implementation do not affect or distort cooperative principles.

Organizations of farmers, including agricultural cooperators, are key institutions in the revitalization of agriculture and the development of rural areas, hence to economic revival, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Agricultural supply and marketing cooperatives are responsible for major market shares of agricultural production in advanced market economies, and have shown considerable success in adjusting to intense competition and far-reaching restructuring. In Africa, Asia and Latin America such cooperatives offer a principal means of facilitating the full market participation of small farmers. Reorganized and modernized cooperatives in central and eastern Europe and in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States could play a vital role in the future efficiency of agriculture, often vital to successful economic transformation. Given that socially appropriate and ecologically sustainable rural development is of the greatest importance to the solution of numerous economic, social, demographic and environmental problems, the report draws attention to the urgency of taking priority action to implement the Plan of Action for People's Participation in Rural Development

adopted at the twenty-sixth session of the FAO Conference in 1991, cooperatives being a most important vehicle for such participation (see page 15 of this issue).

Savings and credit cooperatives (credit unions) have had the most dynamic growth of all cooperatives: worldwide membership has grown by an annual average of more than 8 per cent since 1985. Savings, loans, reserves and assets have each more than doubled, with an annual growth of over 20 per cent during the same period. At the end of 1990, individuals who were members of member organizations of WOCCU made up between 35 and 45 per cent of the adult population in Australia, Canada, Ireland and the United States of America. They had a strong potential for mobilizing local savings and providing credit to members, particularly important in apparently capital-scarce conditions, thereby encouraging thrift and entrepreneurial activity, and hence stimulating local multipliers. They appeared to be capable of making a significant contribution to the solution of financial problems facing the countries now engaged in transformation from centrally planned to market-determined societal management.

It is emphasized in the report that a primary purpose of a cooperative is to serve as a means of achieving the economic goals of its members in order to meet their own needs. Nevertheless, respect for this basic condition does not detract from recognition that cooperatives, by their very existence and their economic viability, contribute to the achievement of broad goals of social progress. They offer chances of economic advancement to disadvantaged sections of society. Cooperatives have constituted a means whereby individuals have been able to avoid unemployment. In the European Communities from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, many worker or production cooperatives have been formed, mainly as a means of avoiding unemployment. Large industrial groups have set up workers' cooperatives to safeguard production from a branch experiencing difficulties or to avoid the social damage of closure.

New types of cooperative have helped to meet members' needs for social services, such as child care. Their contribution to more effective citizen participation is significant: cooperatives in most countries are "schools for democracy". With their hundreds of millions of members (estimated at 700 million worldwide) to which the family members must be added, it could be estimated that perhaps 35 to 40 per cent of the world's population are directly involved. They constitute a significant means of ensuring social stability throughout the world. Consequently, it appears important that Governments should give full attention to the contributions which many types of cooperatives are able to make to the achievement of social policy goals, particularly at a time when it is increasingly considered to be appropriate for the public sector to transfer responsibility to individual citizens, particularly when organized for the purposes of self-help.

It is stated in the report that most categories of cooperatives, but particularly agricultural and consumer cooperatives, are able to make significant contributions to ecologically rational and sustainable development: indeed they are able to do that more effectively than other types of enterprise given their member-controlled character. The report finds it appropriate that Governments, supported by all relevant parts of the international community, should give renewed attention to the mutual benefits of more effective involvement of women in cooperatives in the context of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 and of preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995. In that regard, it is thought that it might be helpful to take into consideration the prototype guidelines adopted by the Interregional Consultative Meeting on Women in Cooperatives held at Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in June 1988, and organized jointly by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and INSTRAW.

Governments have an important role in establishing and maintaining an environment conducive to cooperatives. It is pointed out in the report that recommendation 127 concerning the role of cooperatives in the economic and social development of developing countries, adopted by the General Conference of the ILO in 1966, remains the single most

comprehensive statement made within the United Nations system concerning the nature and objectives of governmental policy in respect to the cooperative sector, and concerning guidelines on methods of implementation of that policy. It offers guidance to Governments in their task of formulating comprehensive policies in respect to cooperatives, ensuring an effective allocation of public resources to promote and support cooperatives, harmonizing and coordinating the activities of the governmental agencies involved, and establishing institutional arrangements for ensuring the effective participation of representatives of cooperatives in policy formulation and implementation.

The countries of central and eastern Europe and of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as those in Africa, Asia and Latin America also engaged in a transformation from centrally planned to market-oriented strategies for societal management, share a serious problem: the past establishment of types of cooperative has been created from above down, without the genuine participation of members. For that reason, new Governments and potential members of cooperatives have tended to reject the cooperative form of enterprise. It is considered in the report that that reaction, although understandable, would result in those societies missing the opportunities which are provided by cooperatives for resolving a number of societal problems. It is pointed out that the experience of market-oriented countries has shown that strong cooperatives in certain sectors of the economy is an essential feature of their social structures. Consequently, establishing vigorous true cooperatives counts among the principal means whereby economic and social problems might be resolved. It appears important for their long-term development that those countries find ways to encourage a new and spontaneous development of cooperatives from the indigenous base of society.

A number of the conclusions, and the recommendations based upon them, are concerned with enhancing the capability of the international community, and particularly the United Nations system, to promote and support cooperatives, both directly and through Governments, helping them to establish a societal context within which cooperatives might most effectively operate to meet their members' goals and help to overcome societal problems.

In the last of his conclusions the Secretary-General notes that, notwithstanding current difficulties, there exists a highly successful degree of collaboration between national, regional and global cooperative organizations, donor Governments, and both regional and global intergovernmental organizations, notably the relevant specialized agencies within the United Nations system, in assisting cooperatives and in supporting governmental efforts to establish the most favourable possible environment for their developm nt.

The Secretary-General's report was considered by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1992, held in New York from 29 June to 31 July.

Action taken by the Economic and Social Council

At its substantive session of 1992, the Social Committee of the Council recommended to the Council a draft resolution (number IV) on the role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends, which the Council subsequently adopted as resolution 1992/25. In the preambular sections of this draft resolution, the Council welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the status and role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends (A/47/216-E/1992/43).

The Council recognized the importance of the policy-oriented research being undertaken by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs concerning the relevance of cooperatives to the achievement of the social policy objectives set forth in the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, in the execution of which it acted as focal point within the United Nations system. The Council noted that 1995 would mark the centenary of the establishment of the International Cooperative Alliance. The Council noted with satisfaction the important recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General directed towards ensuring the best possible

means of dealing with the issue of cooperatives in the light of their broad significance in contributing to the solution of major economic and social problems. It welcomed the recommendation contained in paragraph 4 (a) of the report of the Secretary-General, and bore in mind the substantial support shown by Governments and by the international cooperative movement for the idea of observing an international day of cooperatives. Finally, it indicated its appreciation to government agencies, national organizations representing cooperatives, specialized agencies of the United Nations and other organizations, especially the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives, for their valuable contribution.

In the draft resolution, the Council recommended that the General Assembly proclaim an international day of cooperatives to be observed on the first Saturday in July 1995, marking the centenary of the International Cooperative Alliance, and that the Assembly consider the possibility of observing an international day in future years. The Council encouraged Governments to consider fully the potential of cooperatives for contributing to the solution of economic, social and environmental problems in formulating national development strategies, and it encouraged the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to redouble its efforts of support and coordination in order to achieve the social policy objectives set forth in the Guiding Principles. It invited government agencies, national organizations representing cooperatives, specialized agencies of the United Nations and other organizations, especially the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives, to maintain and increase their programmes of support to the international cooperative movement, to the extent possible within existing resources. The Council also invited, as it had already done in resolution 1668 (LII) of 1 June 1972, the specialized agencies of the United Nations that have a substantial interest in cooperatives, especially the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, as well as other organizations, especially the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other concerned international organizations of cooperatives that are not yet members of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives, to become members at an early date in order to ensure its effectiveness by their contribution of appropriate resources. Finally it recommended that the General Assembly, to the extent possible within existing resources, request the Secretary-General to maintain and increase the support provided by the United Nations to the programmes and objectives of the international cooperative movement and, in his next report on the status and role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends, to indicate the progress made towards that goal.

NEWS FROM GOVERNMENTS

Spain

In a report on progress achieved in the implementation of the Guiding Principles, which was transmitted to the Secretary-General in April 1991, the Spanish Ministry of Social Affairs provided a comprehensive picture of successes as well as problems encountered since the Interregional Consultation in 1987, when the Guiding Principles had been adopted, in respect of a number of major plans and programmes carried out by its Dirección General de Acción Social (General Directorate for Social Action). Information was transmitted also concerning disabled persons, provided by the Instituto Nacional de Servicios Sociales (National Social Services Institute), the advancement of women, provided by the Instituto de la Mujer (Institute for Women), and infancy and childhood, provided by the Dirección General de Protección Jurídica del Menor (General Directorate for the Legal Protection of Minors).

Four innovative programmes undertaken by the General Directorate for Social Action were described. The first programme was the *Plan Concertado de Prestaciones Bàsicas de Servicios Sociales de las Corporaciones Locales* (Comprehensive Plan for the Provision of Basic Social Services by Local Authorities). This had been introduced as part of a process of administrative decentralization being carried out within Spain, and in order that the provision of social services at the local level would better approximate the needs of beneficiaries. The legislative mandate for that Plan was to be

found in the *Ley Reguladora de Régimen Local* (Guiding Law of Local Management), which had established the responsibilities of municipalities in respect to the provision of social services. All municipalities with populations greater than 20,000 persons were obliged to provide such services. That Law also established the responsibilities of local authorities in respect to each other, and especially in respect to other public agencies. The necessary coordination was to be achieved by means of administrative agreements to be reached between each of the parties.

The objective of the Plan was the establishment of a network of basic social services which would assure citizens throughout Spain a certain minimum provision. That was to be guaranteed by each of the Autonomous Communities (regions). In 1988, the year in which the Ministry of Social Affairs was established, an Agreement in that respect had been reached between the central national administration and the Autonomous Communities. Four areas of basic service provision were to be guaranteed by those means. Information and orientation services were to be directed towards individuals, groups and institutions concerning their rights and the social services which existed. Specialist advice on social problems was also to be made available, including if necessary the direction of clients to the responsible social services. Prevention and rehabilitation services were undertaken by professional teams directed towards persons and groups at risk of social marginalization. Their purpose was the prevention of such a condition, and if appropriate, reinsertion of dysfunctional persons within families and the community. The home-help service was to provide care to individuals or families if they found themselves in situations where they were unable to undertake normal activities, or in situations of conflict between family members. Shelter and cohabitation services were intended to provide an alternative for persons who lacked an adequate family environment. In order to implement those services, the Plan financed the establishment and operation of Social Services Centres, Reception Centres and Hostels (refuges).

The population which was the object of that Plan was considered to be made up of the totality of the citizens of the country, but to include especially those who, at a certain moment, found themselves in a situation of social need but could not satisfy that by using their own resources. It was emphasized that the function of social welfare was developmental. Social services belonged to the whole population, even though special obligations towards disadvantaged groups were recognized.

Funds were made available from the general budget of the State. They consisted of 1,500 million pesetas in 1989 rising to 7,700 million pesetas in 1991. The distribution of those resources among the Autonomous Communities was done on the basis of population criteria and various forms of compensation established between the Autonomous Communities. Those undertook to match the central funds provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Contributions by the local authorities, largely responsible for implementation of the programmes, was to be determined by the relevant Autonomous Community.

A number of difficulties had been identified in respect of the execution of that Plan. A principal one was that of insufficient staff training, given that the Plan assumed the hiring of numerous new professionals with specific training. At times management processes were slow as they were totally dependent on achieving a consensus between the Central Administration and the Autonomous Communities. The complexity of the evaluation process had also been identified as a serious problem.

The second innovative programme in which the General Directorate for Social Action had been engaged was that of a *Pilot Programme for Situations of Need*. That was composed of 21 projects originating in the Second European Programme against Poverty of the European Communities, implementation of which had begun in Spain in 1987, and whose completion was forecast for December 1991. The Pilot Programme also included four projects in the programme "Poverty Three" of the European Communities. These were to begin in March 1990 and end in June 1994.

It had been difficult to draw short-term conclusions in respect to that type of project, characterized as experimental and innovative approaches to the treatment of marginalization. However, in respect of a number of programmes it had been found that administrative structures and processes of organization had constrained their normal planning and execution.

Participation of beneficiaries themselves in all aspects of the process of policy formulation and implementation, which had been initially considered most desirable, had been diminished by the lack of experience of the population in being in any way responsible for their own development. Coordination between the social welfare policy area and those different policy areas with which it would normally establish operational relations had been seriously checked by a highly uncoordinated approach. Each administrative entity followed a separate line, thereby losing the conception of globality in respect to the development of a territorial area or a population group. Private initiatives, undertaken by non-governmental organizations, depended enormously on the public administration and had not acquired the autonomy and strength which that type of organization possessed in other countries. That had constrained the processes of development in projects where the harmonization of private and public initiatives would have been fundamental to success.

The third innovative programme was that of Promoting and Supporting the Voluntary Sector. The General Directorate for Social Action in the Ministry of Social Affairs had been engaged since 1987 in the development of a programme whose general objective had been the promotion of voluntary social action. That programme was seen as an application of recommendations made by the Council of Europe. Technical and financial support had been provided to all agencies within the State sector which developed activities supportive of the voluntary sector engaged in the social welfare policy area. Concrete action had been taken in April 1986 to establish a Platform for the Promotion of the Voluntary Sector in Spain. Composed of 16 voluntary organizations, the Platform was a member of "Volonteurope", the Committee for the Promotion of Voluntary Action of the European Communities. In addition to the creation of the Platform, the General Directorate had drafted and published a Guide on Voluntary Work.

In 1984, in the context of a Programme Agreement established between the General Directorate for Social Action and the Spanish Red Cross, the latter had undertaken the preparation of a Guide to Voluntary Organizations. Subsequently annual revisions had been undertaken with the financial support of the General Directorate. The annual International Day of Voluntary Work was celebrated. Brochures on voluntary activity had been produced. The greater proportion of voluntary social welfare organizations in Spain had elaborated and formulated a Charter of the Rights and Responsibilities of the Voluntary Sector. The Spanish Red Cross, the Democratic Solidarity Foundation and the Spanish Caritas had been most active, all subsidized by the General Directorate. In 1990, the General Directorate and the Platform for the Promotion of the Voluntary Sector had agreed to work together to create a State Centre for the Promotion of the Voluntary Sector.

Problems encountered by non-governmental organizations in the voluntary sector which called for attention had included the need to create better channels of communication between them in such a way that they made possible horizontal relationships; the need to establish a forum of interested non-governmental organizations in order to develop common strategies; the need to overcome problems arising from there being so many small, isolated voluntary groups, given that solidarity should be the basic principle of the work of voluntary associations; and finally, in some cases, financial constraints.

The fourth innovative programme was the *Programme of Action in Favour of the Gypsy Community*. Measures taken in favour of that minority during the period 1987-1990 had been based on the Spanish Constitution, which in its article 14 had established the equality of all Spanish citizens before the law without discrimination for reason of race, as well as article 9.2, which had established the responsibility of the public authorities to make such equality effective. Programmes were

being developed which, while fully respecting the distinctive cultural and ethnic condition of the gypsy people, had the purpose of trying to facilitate their more effective participation in national life, to prevent marginalization and to normalize their access to resources widely available to the general population. Personal services would serve to achieve the welfare of persons in their individual and community dimensions.

Measures had been undertaken by the General Directorate in collaboration with the Autonomous Communities and local authorities. With its establishment in 1988 the Ministry of Social Affairs assumed responsibility for the implementation of a National Plan for Gypsy Development. That had been prepared jointly by the Ministry of Relations with the Parliament and the Secretariat of the Government, who had consulted with various ministries and members of the gypsy community. In 1988 also the General Directorate for Social Action formulated an Immediate Intervention Plan for the Gypsy Community. It comprised several areas of activity: institutional cooperation with all relevant ministries in order to promote within their areas of competence positive actions in favour of the gypsy community; technical and financial cooperation with the Autonomous Communities, with the purpose of developing pilot integral intervention projects for the provision of assistance, prevention of marginalization and reintegration of the gypsy community into national society; cooperation with gypsy associations and with non-profit entities working in support of the gypsy community at the national level; and improvement of knowledge of the social condition of the gypsy population.

An Interministerial Group had been established on which were represented the Ministries of the Interior; Labour and Social Security; Culture; Health and Consumption; Public Works and Urbanism; and Education and Science. Its purpose was coordination of the actions of these agencies which specifically affected the gypsy ethnic minority. In order to coordinate those actions undertaken by the separate elements of the Ministry of Social Affairs itself there had been constituted a Ministerial Commission, with representatives of the General Directorate for the Legal Protection of Minors; the Institute for Women; the Youth Institute; and the National Institute for Social Services (INSERSO).

In 1989, for the first time, the State budget included a specific allocation for the Gypsy Development Plan - 500 million pesetas. Of this, 40 per cent was allocated to the Autonomous Communities. Sixty-six pilot projects were undertaken. A committee was charged with following up those projects, to meet periodically in plenary sessions, and also in technical working groups. Since 1990, annual subsidies had been given to gypsy associations working at the national level. In order to improve the effectiveness of cooperation with those associations there had been established in the General Directorate for Social Action a Consultative Committee of Gypsy Associations Working at the National Level, members of which were drawn from the associations themselves and from the staff of the General Directorate.

NEWS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

At its twenty-sixth session held at Rome, Italy, from 9 to 27 November 1991, the Conference of FAO adopted a Plan of Action for People's Participation in Rural Development (see report of the Conference, appendix E). Although formulated in the context of the special responsibilities and concerns of FAO, this Plan is of relevance to all efforts designed to bring about the improvement of the condition of the rural populations which still make up half of the world's population and a much higher percentage of the population in most countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is entirely consonant with the recommendations and objectives of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, and is clearly applicable to the orientation of social policies for rural areas.

In its introduction, it is stated that the overall aim of the Plan of Action is to ensure the active participation of people in the achievement of

sustainable rural development. While it is recognized that other factors relating to social, economic/financial and technical aspects play an important role in achieving that objective, the active participation of rural people, including disadvantaged groups, in action through voluntary, self-reliant organizations of their own choice is equally important. Without such participation, rural development initiatives are unlikely to be sustainable in the long run and rural inequities are unlikely to be redressed.

In order to achieve the goal of sustainable rural development with equity through people's participation, the Plan proposes that action be taken in seven areas, as summarized below. For each of those the Plan of Action sets out a summary description of central issues and problems, followed by specific recommendations for consideration by member Governments, with whom rest responsibility for policy decisions and for formulating and implementing participatory development policies and approaches. The Plan also outlines proposals for action by FAO itself in support of Governments, but these are not summarized here.

1. *Promotion of greater public awareness of the role of people's participation and people's organizations in agricultural and rural development*

Achieving sustainable rural development and environmental protection requires the cooperation of large, sometimes diverse populations, residing within specific ecological areas. Such cooperation could be enhanced by the voluntary and cooperative action and participation of all sectors of the rural population, including women and other disadvantaged groups.

Full recognition of the inherent advantages of people's participation in mobilizing rural communities for sustainable agriculture and rural development is an essential first step. Many key decision makers need to be informed and convinced of the intrinsic benefits that flow from enhanced people's participation in development programmes and projects.

Consequently, it is proposed that Governments create greater awareness among their officials of the benefits of adopting participatory approaches in order to reach rural people; establish clear policies and regulations for the training of their officials in the principles, practice and benefits of people's participation in development; and apply communication methods and materials, to be used by government staff and people's organizations, in the promotion of people's participation and in the sharing of knowledge and skills.

In order to reach all sectors of the rural population it is proposed that Governments might utilize a variety of organizational modalities, such as small informal groups, traditional community associations, cooperatives and unions. They might mobilize rural communities to achieve sustainable rural development objectives, using participatory approaches, acting through existing or new rural organizations, and they might ensure that mobilization activities are focused on satisfying needs and produce tangible benefits for those involved.

2. *Creation of favourable legal and policy conditions for people's participation*

Legal administrative frameworks should encourage the free association of rural people, thus enabling them to participate in the development process. Legislation which restricts the right of individuals to freely organize themselves into participatory self-help organizations in order to pursue their own economic interests and gain access to land, input, markets and services could constitute a serious obstacle to participation.

Likewise, national economic policies in many countries, especially those affecting the pricing and distribution of agricultural input and the pricing and marketing of farm production, credit services, taxation and revenue-sharing, should not discourage or penalize rural savings and investment. Laws which recognize the rights of rural people to establish new autonomous economic organizations serving their needs or which give authority to local governments to spend locally generated tax revenues could foster local initiatives in support of people's participation.

The vital role women play in socio-economic life in both agricultural and non-agricultural activities must be adequately recognized in rural development planning and programme implementation. Rural development based on growth with equity and people's participation would therefore require the full integration of women, including promoting their equal access to natural resources and services, equal rights to inheritance and equal opportunities to develop and employ their skills.

It is proposed that Governments establish clear policies and regulations that favour people's participation and encourage the establishment of people's organizations. Towards that end, they might establish an appropriate framework which provides a basis for free association of rural people in organizations of their choice. Governments might introduce and enforce policies and legal and structural reforms (such as land reform, reform of tenancy laws and water-use rights) which promote more equitable access to resources and services for the rural population, especially the rural poor. They might also enact and amend laws to ensure equal rights and full membership for women and other disadvantaged groups in people's organizations. Finally they might take action to reform or, where necessary, create local government institutions to promote and facilitate participation of rural people through organizations of their choice.

3. *Strengthening internal capacities of the rural people's organizations at local and national levels*

Experience in both the developed and developing countries has shown that the existence of active people's organizations is essential for the success of participatory approaches to rural development. Government efforts therefore must focus on promoting and strengthening the growth of self-reliant rural organizations so that they can serve as channels for the delivery of government development services to the rural population and participate effectively in the design, implementation and monitoring/evaluation of development activities.

In order to promote voluntary rural people's organizations pursuing their member's interests, rural development policies might need to be reoriented. The lack of trained managers and local leaders of people's organizations directly affects their ability to achieve self-sufficiency goals and frequently leads to loss of funds, confidence and motivation.

Consequently, the Plan proposes that Governments introduce policies to facilitate the transformation of government-sponsored and government-financed people's organizations, especially cooperatives, into self-reliant, member-controlled and financially autonomous organizations. They might promote the use of new bottom-up approaches to building rural organizations, e.g. through informal group formation as a complementary approach to existing government efforts. It is proposed also that Governments might strengthen training programmes for leaders, managers and members of people's organizations in order to reinforce management and technical capacities; establish self-control mechanisms, audit services and modes of financing which strengthen the self-reliance capacity of people's organizations; encourage the mobilization of local member resources (member savings, share capital, labour contributions etc.) to finance people's organization activities and growth; and finally limit the external financing of people's organizations to the minimum amount necessary and to a mutually agreed time-frame so that it does not undermine their independence and self-reliance.

4. *Decentralization of government decision-making*

Decentralized systems of public administration and government decision-making encourages local initiatives and participation at the local level. Rural people are more likely to support development initiatives when those take into consideration the views and expressed needs of the intended beneficiaries. The promotion of people's participation depends to a great extent on the delegation to local levels of the responsibility for decision-making, including that for raising revenues and incurring expenditures.

The effective delegation of decision-making to local levels also require the existence or establishment of appropriate mechanisms for facilitating increased dialogue and collaboration

between Governments, development agencies and local people's organizations. Where those mechanisms are in place, decentralization efforts are more effective. For those reasons the Plan proposes that Governments might introduce changes in administrative and budgetary procedures which would facilitate the delegation of authority and responsibility to local levels for decision-making, revenue raising and spending; establish local consultative, advisory and planning bodies composed of people's organizations, non-governmental organizations and government representatives to assist Governments in the decentralization of decision-making; and develop new accounting, local oversight and control mechanisms which would facilitate decentralized decision-making.

5. *Promotion of increased dialogue and technical collaboration between Governments, development agencies and people's organizations*

In many developing countries, Governments, development agencies and non-governmental organizations are often involved in different ways in promoting and supporting village community groups and people's organizations representing the rural poor. Promoting exchange on information and dialogue between all parties could help collaboration in participatory development at the local level. Many Governments in developing countries are seeking solutions at the local level, some by encouraging greater dialogue with non-governmental organizations.

With the help of FAO, the World Bank and UNDP, non-governmental organizations in some developing countries have recently established collaborative mechanisms, such as umbrella organizations or coalitions, which bring together international and national professional voluntary development agencies, donor non-governmental organizations and people's organizations. Those umbrella organizations, or non-governmental organizations networks, have become important supporting institutions for information exchange and provision of training for leaders of people's organizations at the country level and for promoting dialogue and collaboration with government and donor agencies on policy issues in rural development.

It is proposed that Governments establish multi-institutional mechanisms, coordinating or advisory bodies etc. at national and local levels within and between ministries in agriculture, agrarian reform and rural development (among others), which would facilitate a dialogue and collaboration with non-governmental organizations, and people's organizations on policies, programmes and projects to promote participatory development. They might also facilitate legally, administratively and technically, the establishment of umbrella organizations of non-governmental organizations representing and servicing rural people's organizations. They might also take action to enable the participation of representatives from people's organizations in national and local-level training activities related to information exchange, policy dialogue and the design and implementation of participatory rural development projects.

6. *Introduction of appropriate operational procedures and methods*

The effective promotion of people's participation requires the development of appropriate operational methods and decentralized mechanisms which would facilitate wider participation of the rural population in the formulation, design, implementation and evaluation of rural development policies, programmes and project activities. Moreover, research on people's participation and on the education and training of promoters of participation or of the beneficiaries themselves, need to take into account the local needs, skill levels and experiences of the rural people concerned.

Hence it is proposed that Governments might establish appropriate administrative procedures and financial arrangements at local levels to enhance the establishment and activities of informal and formal groupings of rural people and their participation in development activities, and introduce more participatory methodologies which would permit rural people to play a more active role in identifying their research and technical assistance needs, in designing research and training approaches and in monitoring progress and evaluating results.

7. *Monitoring and evaluation of people's participation*

The lack of reliable information on people's participation issues constitutes a major constraint to rural development policy makers and planners at national and international levels and frequently leads to an incorrect assessment of the development needs of rural people and their organizations as well as a sub-optimal use of resources destined for that sector. Those inadequacies also make it difficult for Governments, development agencies and people's organizations to properly measure progress achieved in improving the extent of participation by rural people and the effectiveness of their organizations.

Consequently the Plan proposes that Governments might establish appropriate mechanisms for collecting, processing and disseminating data on people's participation and organizations on a systematic and regular basis so as to assist in policy formulation and decision-making. They might also develop participatory monitoring and evaluation systems to assess progress in people's participatory approaches to rural and agricultural development, and assess periodically the overall effects of policies to enhance people's participation to determine whether further improvements are needed to ensure progress.

For the full text of the Plan of Action, and for information on its implementation contact:

Mr. H. Meliczek, Chief
Rural Development Analysis and Organization Service
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
I-00100 Rome, Italy
Telephone: (39) (6) 57971; telefax: (39) (6) 5146-172.

Or contact any of the regional and national offices of FAO or of the resident representatives of the United Nations Development Programme.

NEWS FROM UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES

Centre of Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, Portugal

The Centre of Social Studies was created in 1978 at the School of Economics of the University of Coimbra by a group of social scientists aiming to promote scientific research on Portuguese society and comparative studies on social change in modern societies. Now it brings together researchers from universities and other institutions on interdisciplinary projects covering almost all the areas of the social sciences and the humanities. The results of their research are usually published in the *Revista Crítica de Ciencas Sociais*, a journal that comes out three times a year (approximately in January, May and October). Articles have abstracts in French and English.

One of the present areas of research is concerned with social policies and social welfare and is being carried out by a team of sociologists and economists. This project has given rise to a "permanent observatory" on the Portuguese welfare society. The relations between the State and civil society are undergoing a period of profound change in Portugal. This is not a typically Portuguese phenomenon, but rather a universal phenomenon which in Portugal occurs with a certain specificity. This specificity is accounted for by the fact that Portuguese civil society has been traditionally very dependent *vis-à-vis* the State, allowing even for areas normally characterized by autonomous social regulation to be controlled by the State.

The process of reconstitution of the State, which is now occurring particularly in the major post-industrial societies of Europe and North America, generally implies returning to civil society a number of areas or aspects of social regulation previously entrusted to the State. The result is greater independence for non-State social practices and a renewed prominence for non-governmental social actors.

The aim of the research is to analyse how this process of State reconstitution is taking place in Portugal. The main hypothesis is that given the institutional weakness of civil society in

Portugal, the process whereby non-State social practices and actors become autonomous is in itself controlled by the State and indeed amounts to an opportunity for the State to assert, in a new way, its centrality *vis-à-vis* social regulation and its traditional ascendancy over civil society.

This hypothesis is being tested in two domains: (a) in social policies, with special emphasis on the relations between the State and civil society in respect to health and social security; and (b) in economic policies, with special emphasis on the ways in which the State contributes towards the shaping of the social and economic actors by privatizing State enterprises, promoting business associations and intervening in the social dialogue, including collective bargaining.

The study of the role of civil society in welfare production is particularly concerned with informal systems of care related to aged and sick people. A panel of families and private social institutions has been selected, and changes in social consumption patterns and strategies for basic needs satisfaction are being analysed.

For further information, contact Professor Pedro Hespanha, Centro de Estudos Sociais, Colégio de S. Jerónimo, Apartado 3087, 3000 Coimbra, Portugal; telefax: 351 39 29076.

The Pan African Institute for Development (Institut panafricain pour le développement - Instituto Panafricano de Desarrollo)

The headquarters of the Pan African Institute for Development (PAID) are located at Douala, Cameroon. There are four regional scientific and pedagogical councils. In addition, there are four constituent regional institutes: a French-language training college for agriculture, the Institut panafricain pour le développement for Central Africa, set up in 1965 at Douala; an English language equivalent, PAID West Africa, formed in 1969 at Buea (Cameroon); the francophone Institut panafricain pour le développement for West Africa and the Sahel, set up in 1977 at Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso); and the anglophone PAID for East and Southern Africa, set up in 1979 at Kabwe (Zambia). In keeping with its aims, the administration of the Institute has been progressively transferred from non-Africans and the headquarters moved from Geneva to Douala.

The Institute maintains a dual role as an international association and as a training institute. Its aims are to further the economic, social and cultural development of African countries; promote integrated and participatory development, stressing the plurality of ways and means; provide long- and short-term practical training for rural development officers at all levels; train trainers, allowing maximum multiplier effects; conduct training and research; and provide support to local, self-help projects.

Its activities comprise primarily field work operating in three areas: support to local populations; studies and research; and training. Projects include: training of senior officials in management; technical seminars; symposia; and consultations for the preparation and implementation of operational projects. The Institute has prepared a study of rural development problems and ways in which these problems have been resolved by means of intensive action in zones for guided integrated development. It assists in the setting up of sub-regional education and research networks. Publications include a *Cahiers de l'IPD* (twice a year) and *PAID Report* (twice a year, several series).

In December 1991, the Institute completed a comprehensive review of the situation in Africa, in response to a request from the Social Development Division. Although not an organization specialized in the evaluation of national policies in respect of developmental social welfare, the Institute provided a most valuable survey of the precise situation in the region.

Its response was based on the experience gained in its activities in integrated rural development, particularly by the training of development staff from 44 of the sub-Saharan African countries. Of particular value was the identification of a number of innovative approaches to social service provision undertaken by non-governmental organizations and particularly by local community self-help associations, some of which were already organized in national and even international networks. The material which the Institute provided will be drawn upon in the preparation of the next report of the Secretary-General (see page 4 of this issue), and in a number of the technical publications now in preparation.

International Centre of the National Institute for Social Work, London

The National Institute for Social Work, established in 1962, is an independent organization which aims to identify and promote good practice and good management in social work; to encourage agencies in all sectors to be responsive to users, carers and communities; to develop the effectiveness of staff working in all sectors of personal social services; and to contribute to changes in social policy and their implementation.

Following a feasibility study carried out with other social work agencies in the United Kingdom, the National Institute for Social Work established an International Centre in London in April 1992, with the aim of developing arrangements by which staff of the personal social services could use international exchange, including study visits both to and from the United Kingdom, as a means of personal and professional development and to learn from experience elsewhere. The Centre is funded by the Department of Health for three years.

The International Centre is at present concentrating on identifying: the extent to which international exchange is taking place; networks, agencies and individuals currently participating in international exchange; and resources and systems available to facilitate international exchange.

A database of agencies and individuals with an interest in international exchange is being established. To be included in this database and to receive mailings, please contact the International Centre with details of your international work.

The International Centre is currently making initial contact with a large number of organizations, networks and individuals, and will be making further contact with key organizations and individuals later this year, prior to an official launch in early 1993.

For further information contact Mark Watson at the National Institute for Social Work, 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SS, United Kingdom; telephone: 0044(0)71 383 5282; telefax: 0044(0)71 387 7968.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thirty-third session of the Commission for Social Development of the United Nations, Vienna, Austria, 8-18 February 1993

On 30 May 1991, the Economic and Social Council approved, by its decision 1991/226, the provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-third session of the Commission for Social Development. The first substantive issue to be considered, under agenda item 3, will be "Review of the world social situation". Under this item the Commission will review social conditions and issues of global concern, giving particular emphasis to the context of the changing world economy and the implications of those changes for social policies and programmes. Special attention will be given to the actual situation and particular problems in Africa and in the least developed countries elsewhere. Emphasis will be placed on the review of new approaches and methods for the solution of problems based, *inter alia*, on recent national experience. Documentation for this agenda item will be the *1993 Report on the World Social Situation* and the report of the Secretary-General on the critical social situation in Africa (pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/6).

Under agenda item 4, on "Monitoring of international plans and programmes of action", the Commission will monitor the implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, the Guidelines for Further Planning and Suitable Follow-up in the Field of Youth, the International Plan of Action on Ageing, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), and their follow-up arrangements, as well as the social components of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. In its capacity as preparatory body for the International Year of the Family, the Commission will review progress made in the preparation for the observance of the Year, and will offer guidance for possible follow-up action to the Year.

The Commission will review concurrently the relevant activities of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat in the field of social development, including technical cooperation activities, in particular those relating to social planning and national capacity-building in social-policy design and implementation, and to developmental social welfare, cooperatives, community and local-level action and family issues, as well as activities, reports and strategies relating to youth, ageing and disabled persons. The Commission will receive reports from the regional commissions on their social development and social welfare activities, as well as reports on relevant expert group meetings.

The Commission will also consider under this item a sub-item for in-depth discussion entitled "Development of a long-term strategy to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond, with particular emphasis on national policies".

Documentation for this agenda item will include the report of the Secretary-General on the major issues and programme activities of the Secretariat and the regional commissions relating to social development and welfare, and to specific social groups; the report of the meeting of experts, held at Vancouver, Canada, in 1992, in conjunction with the conference entitled "Independence 1992", on the subject of a long-term strategy to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond; the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group to elaborate standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons; a note by the Secretary-General containing a draft calendar of activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace and a draft world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond; and the report of the Secretary-General on progress achieved and obstacles encountered in implementing the social development goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

In addition, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/90, the Commission will have before it the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on progress achieved in the implementation of and follow-up action to the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future. The Commission will have an opportunity to comment on this report prior to its examination at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July 1993. In response to Council decision 1991/227, the Commission will also consider a report of the Secretary-General on progress achieved in the area of social policy research and advisory services for countries undergoing economic and social policy adjustment (see page 6 of this issue). It is possible that the Commission will also consider progress being made in respect to the convening of a world summit for social development (see page 1 of this issue).

Under a fifth agenda item, on "priority subjects", the Commission will consider in depth the social consequences of population growth and changing social conditions with particular emphasis on the family, bearing in mind the various concepts of the family in different political, social and cultural systems. The Commission will consider the conclusions and recommendations of relevant expert group meetings, focusing on policy measures and taking into account the special concerns of the developing countries. Documentation will include the report of the expert group meeting on the social consequences of population growth and changing social conditions with particular emphasis on the family.

The following 10 States Members of the United Nations were elected by the Economic and Social Council for a four-year term as members of the Commission for Social Development (one of the Council's subsidiary bodies) beginning on 1 January 1993: Bolivia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Denmark, Malta, Netherlands, Philippines, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe. At the time of writing it is not known which, if any, successor States to

Yugoslavia will take up membership of the Commission. The other 22 members are Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Nigeria and Sudan; Cyprus, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan; Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine; Argentina, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico; Austria, France, Germany, Sweden and the United States of America.

Thirtieth International Cooperative Alliance Congress, Tokyo, Japan, 27-30 October 1992

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), the largest international cooperative organization, is an international association of cooperatives from all sectors of activity. Its membership is composed of some 200 national and international cooperative organizations from 80 countries, which in turn represent more than 740,000 local cooperative societies with approximately 700 million individual members. Its activities are concentrated in five main areas: to promote and defend values and principles shared by the membership; to stimulate an interchange of ideas, information and practical collaboration among member organizations; to disseminate information on the structure and trends of the international cooperative movement; to act as a catalyst for the development of cooperative structures, especially in developing countries; and to represent the cooperative movement at the United Nations and, when requested by members, to national Governments. In addition to its development work in Africa, Asia and Latin America, ICA supports the development of cooperatives in the former centrally planned economy countries. Currently it identifies gender questions, human resource development and the environment as priority areas. In 1990, ICA called on all members to join in efforts to stop the degradation of the human and natural environment. During 1992 it coordinated a cooperative delegation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and organized in Indonesia a conference of ministers responsible for cooperative development in Asia and the Pacific.

The Executive-Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed, is to transmit in person a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to the Congress. This will emphasize the significance attached by the United Nations to the continuation of the very active and constructive partnership between it and the Alliance, which has existed since 1969.

The two major themes of the Congress will be cooperative values, and the contribution which cooperatives are able to make to the solution of problems of the environment. Already at the Twenty-third ICA Congress, held at Vienna in 1966, the Alliance approved a set of cooperative principles. These were:

"1. Membership of a cooperative society should be voluntary and available without artificial restrictions or any social, political, racial or religious discrimination, to all persons who can make use of its services and are willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

"2. Cooperative societies are democratic organizations. Their affairs should be administered by persons elected or appointed in a manner agreed by the members and accountable to them. Members of primary societies should enjoy equal rights of voting (one member, one vote) and participation in decisions affecting their societies. In other than primary societies the administration should be conducted on a democratic basis in a suitable form.

"3. Share capital should only receive a strictly limited rate of interest, if any.

"4. Surplus or saving, if any, arising out of the operations of a society belong to the members of that society and should be distributed in such a manner as would avoid one member gaining at the expense of others. This may be done by decision of the members as follows:

"(a) By provision for development of the business of the cooperative;

"(b) By provision of common services; or,

"(c) By distribution among the members in proportion to their transactions with the society.

"5. All cooperative societies should make provision for the education of their members, officers and employees, and of the general public, in the principles and techniques of cooperation, both economic and democratic.

"6. All cooperative organizations, in order to best serve the interests of their members and

their communities should actively cooperate in every practical way with other cooperatives at local, national and international levels."

As the cooperative movement prepares to enter the twenty-first century it has been looking within itself to reassess its system of values and to analyse its working principles in response to the new challenges facing cooperatives today. During the last four years extensive research and consultations have been held with cooperative leaders worldwide. This has led to a report on "Basic values in a changing world", which will be presented at the Congress. This topic was considered important because of the millions of individuals around the world who make up an international cooperative movement which is more pluralistic and international than ever before. However, it was considered that despite their large number, cooperatives cannot be a strong moral force and a powerful movement for economic and social change without their own well-formulated and consistent value system.

The report emphasizes the values of equality and equity, voluntary and mutual self-help, and economic and social emancipation. Although it concedes that these values will be interpreted differently in various parts of the world on the basis of specific political, economic and cultural conditions, it stresses that cooperative ideals have always been motivated by basic ethics of honesty, caring, democracy, social responsibility and national and international cooperation. These characteristics are the essence of the cooperative way.

The International Cooperative Alliance participated actively in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNICED) held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992 (see the special issue of *ICA News*, No. 3, 1992 on cooperatives and the environment). The Congress will examine further the role of cooperatives in the follow-up to this Conference.

It is significant in this respect that the Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly of the United Nations, concludes that most categories of cooperatives, but particularly agricultural and consumer cooperatives, are able to make significant contributions, and often more effectively than other types of enterprise given their member-controlled character, to ecologically rational and sustainable development. Consequently, he concludes in following up the recommendations of UNICED, Governments and all relevant components of the United Nations system might find it beneficial to promote the full realization of this potential.

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